

values that music departments and conservatories refuse to shake.⁴² This situation allows cultural theorists to look at music and ask questions relevant to the humanities and social sciences that musicologists may choose to avoid or, in the worst cases, do not recognize as significant.

How could this epistemological change take place in the discipline? One option would be for musicologists to start migrating to nonmusic programs and establish critical intellectual conversations beyond the boundaries of the discipline and beyond the constraints of the conservatory mindset. In order for this to happen, musicologists need to make their research questions relevant to larger intellectual dialogues. Whether it is by embracing the attitude of performance studies, as I have suggested elsewhere, or by other means—in order to become more relevant to a wider intellectual community, musicology should intensify its shift of focus from “what music is” to “what happens when music happens.”⁴³ I believe that such a shift ultimately advocates for an approach to the study of American music that, by recognizing the unique dynamics of current demographic shifts in the country, makes music scholarship relevant to a variety of contemporary intellectual, public, and political debates about citizenship and the meaning of the nation-state in times of postnationality.

U.S. Music Studies in a “Moment of Danger”

SHERRIE TUCKER

As a scholar who studies U.S. music from within the context of an American studies department, I offer my remarks as a reflection on the historical relationships of the study of U.S. music to a cluster of departments, programs, and centers that welcomed our work before music departments were ready. U.S. music studies emerged not from a single department or discipline, but through connections made by passionate and determined bridge-builders who—out of necessity—forged routes between music, ethnic studies, women’s studies, African American studies, and American studies, among others. Although there are many signs that we have reached an era of disciplinary safety for studying music of the United States within music departments, this moment of acceptance is also a “moment of danger.” The very programs, centers, and departments that brought U.S. music studies to this point are currently under attack.

42. See for example Cavicchi, *Listening and Longing: Music Lovers in the Age of Barnum*; Neufeld, “Living the Work: Meditations on a Lark”; Gaztambide-Fernández, “Wherefore the Musicians?”; Suisman, *Selling Sounds: The Commercial Revolution in American Music*; Shank, “Productive Orientalisms: Imagining Noise and Silence across the Pacific, 1957–1967”; and DeNora, *Beethoven and the Construction of Genius: Musical Politics in Vienna, 1792–1803*.

43. See Madrid, “Why Music and Performance Studies? Why Now? An Introduction to the Special Issue.”

In these times of budgetary insecurity, it is crucial to recall the five-month Third World Strike at San Francisco State University in 1968 that mobilized, and was part of, a larger movement in which students, faculty, and staff risked degrees, jobs, and careers because it was *that important* to infuse the academy with hitherto marginalized perspectives, theories, experiences, histories, and insights. The invigorating shake-up that awoke the critical potential, interdisciplinary possibilities, and social relevance of the university in the 1960s and 1970s transformed American studies and facilitated much American music scholarship of those years. The legacy of U.S. music studies is entwined with programs underwritten by the student movement, the civil rights and Black Power movements, the women's movement, La Raza movement, and women-of-color political formations. Forty years later, however, these programs are targeted for cuts in tandem with sharp escalations in anti-immigrant and anti-worker legislation, assaults on women's rights and reproductive freedom, and other infringements of social justice.

The title of my essay is borrowed from George Lipsitz, one of our most influential and socially engaged interdisciplinary scholars. In *American Studies in a Moment of Danger* (2001), Lipsitz maps a history of the discipline as an ongoing interrelationship between academic methods and grass-roots movements. American studies, writes Lipsitz, is "built on the best of both sides, grounding itself in the study of concrete cultural practices, extending the definition of culture to the broadest possible contexts of cultural production and reception, recognizing the role played by national histories and traditions in cultural contestation, and understanding that struggles over meaning are inevitably struggles over resources" (100). We stand to lose that tradition of socially engaged scholarship and activism if we allow the erasure of links between U.S. music studies, ethnic studies, and other programs that were brought into the academy through collective advocacy.

A chilling reminder that struggles over cultural meaning can become struggles over resources arrived with the passage of Arizona's "anti-ethnic studies" bill, HB 2281, which became law on 31 December 2010. It bans classes that "are designed primarily for pupils of a particular ethnic group" or "advocate ethnic solidarity instead of the treatment of pupils as individuals."⁴⁴ The bill targeted the Tucson Unified School District's program in Mexican American Studies (K-12), but it extends to all ethnic studies courses throughout the state, including those in universities. HB 2281 followed closely on the heels of SB 1070, which protects racial profilers but not those being profiled; the bill essentially mandated racial profiling, in its criminalizing of "being in Arizona without papers."⁴⁵ According to a report for *La Prensa*, "Latinos not only run the risk of being considered suspicious on the streets of Arizona; now they are

44. Rowley, "Ariz. Governor Signs Bill Banning Ethnic Studies Programs."

45. "Arizona Apartheid."

also suspected in that state's school books."⁴⁶ This pairing of impulses—the forced treatment of all people as abstract individuals without regard to ethnicity, with the policing of people according to perceived ethnicity on a hierarchical grid of legitimacy—is, as Gary Okihiro writes, “as old as the field of ethnic studies.”⁴⁷ Ethnic studies scholarship has yielded powerful analytical tools and methods for studying these contradictions, knowledge that is crucial to the survival of marginalized groups. Kenneth P. Montiero observes that Arizona's HB 2281 is based on an assumption that everyone is being treated equally in the United States and that ethnic studies tips the balance, ignoring the role that ethnic studies has played in fighting for social justice.⁴⁸ To forget how ethnic studies has facilitated pathways for scholarship on music in the United States is to forget the relationship between U.S. music studies and social justice movements.

While entering the academy under different historical conditions than ethnic studies, American Studies departments were transformed by the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Sadly, the curtain has fallen recently on some of its most highly regarded programs. In 2010, the American Studies program at Michigan State University was suddenly and unexpectedly eliminated, as were programs at the University of Colorado, Boulder, and the University of Missouri, Kansas City. The program at the University of Iowa was identified for possible elimination or restructuring, which has, for now, resulted in consolidating it with other threatened programs—Sports Studies and Indigenous and Native American Studies.⁴⁹ At University of California, Santa Cruz, the American Studies program has disbanded, and Community Studies has been wiped out. Also rumored to be threatened are Feminist Studies and the interdisciplinary History of Consciousness program (where I wrote my dissertation on “all-girl” jazz and swing bands of the 1940s—a project I believe could not have been pursued in most music departments in the 1990s).

Prominent music scholars have been among those affected by these closures. Former director of American Studies at Michigan State, David W. Stowe, who has published on swing, sacred music, and Christian rock, explains that the program has been placed on moratorium and can no longer admit new graduate students.⁵⁰ Faculty were not fired but rather shifted into the nearest appropriate department; this extremely well-regarded program—home of the *Journal of Popular Culture*—will lose its graduate students and all connected teaching, funding, mentoring, and employment opportunities. Eric Porter, former chair of American Studies at University of California, Santa

46. “¡Otra más de Arizona!/Another One in Arizona!”

47. Okihiro, “The Future of Ethnic Studies: The Field Is Under Assault from Without and Within.”

48. Monteiro, “Who Gets to Define Ethnic Studies? Arizona's New Law Represents a One-Sided View.

49. Kim Marra, e-mail to author, 15 March 2011.

50. Stowe, e-mail to author, 5 March 2011.

Cruz, is also a music scholar, whose work situates jazz musicians in African American intellectual history. Porter reflects, "I think it's fair to say that as interdisciplinary programs go into decline, as faculty get stretched thin and some leave institutions like UCSC, the possibilities for putting together dynamic dissertation committees of energized people bringing critical gender, race, postcolonial, and related approaches to music declines."⁵¹

Current attacks on ethnic studies and American studies are related to broader budgetary crises affecting our universities, but they are not wholly attributable to economic concerns. Certainly, Arizona's SB 2281 is not intended as a cost-saving measure, nor is it an attempt to raise academic standards. On the contrary, some programs under fire have been shown to raise the academic performance of students and decrease dropout rates.⁵² This bill instead represents a politicized attack over issues such as legitimacy, identity, canonicity, nationhood, and the definition of U.S. culture, and it calls out for the same kind of combination of scholarship and activism that led to the introduction of ethnic studies in the first place. As such programs are targeted by institutional restructuring, how will scholars in music departments participate in these fights? How might we sustain living memory of our linkages across programs, and of their relationships to social struggles?

What would U.S. music studies look like today, for example, if in the 1960s a young African American scholar of Renaissance music had not proposed teaching a course in Black music and become "furious" at the failure of most of her music department colleagues to comprehend her proposal?⁵³ At this juncture, Eileen Southern embarked on a journey familiar to anyone who has conducted serious research on topics deemed "illegitimate." This confluence of social struggle and academic research resulted in her still indispensable *Music of Black Americans: A History* (1971), followed by her launching the journal, *The Black Perspective in Music*, propelling a field, as Samuel Floyd Jr. explains, and inspiring a "core of black-music scholars."⁵⁴ Guthrie P. Ramsey Jr. notes the significance of Southern's use of the word "Black" in her scholarly publications of the early 1970s, a word that had been "radicalized" in that "auspicious historical moment."⁵⁵ Southern helped bring into the academy both ideas and scholars that had been previously marginalized. Black studies has produced vital theories and methods for our understanding of African American music and culture, approaches that have interrupted con-

51. Porter, e-mail to author, 5 March 2011.

52. According to *El Chicano Weekly*, the programs in Ethnic Studies and Mexican American Studies at the Tucson Unified School District have decreased dropout rates to 2.5 percent, improved standardized test scores, and helped encourage sixty-six of these students to attend college. Mendoza, "UCR Hosts Embattled Arizona Teachers."

53. Floyd Jr., "Eileen Jackson Southern: Quiet Revolutionary," 6-7.

54. Ibid.

55. Ramsey Jr., "Cosmopolitan or Provincial? Ideology in Early Black Music Historiography, 1867-1940," 11.

structions of legitimacy and exclusion while acknowledging power relations and inequalities—a tradition of knowledge production that stands to suffer if ethnic studies continues to be dismantled.

Wherever their disciplinary home, many scholars studying music of the United States continue to produce critical, interdisciplinary, socially engaged work, often grounding their research across at least two fields of study. Ethnomusicologist Deborah Wong, for example, explicitly situates *Speak It Louder: Asian Americans Making Music* (2004) not just as explorations of “ethnic music,” but as studies of complex, shifting identities, communities, and meaning-making through music within an ethnic studies framework, while simultaneously drawing on approaches to identity and music from performance studies, feminist theory, and theories of race and ethnicity. As a result of this multifaceted approach, Wong’s scholarship does not attempt to construct an object called “Asian American music,” but explores many different kinds of music production by a broad range of Asian Americans who identify in many different ways (p. 13).

If music departments are turning out to be safer places to hang our hats than American studies, ethnic studies, and other interdisciplinary programs, it could be that legislators and state budget committees believe that music departments are less critical, less socially engaged, less politically aware, more traditional, more disciplinary, and more disconnected from those “rogue” areas that are perceived as academic-based threats. If this is to be one of those “moments of possibility” that yield the kernel of hope in Lipsitz’s “moments of danger,” then this is a moment when music scholars must insist on our interdisciplinary linkages. Johnella Butler was not referring specifically to the study of U.S. music, but she could have been when she wrote, “[as] an interdisciplinary field of study, Ethnic Studies encompasses the content of the humanities and social sciences while paradoxically being excluded from these fields. But as a matrix, Ethnic Studies provides the situation within which (and through association with) the humanities and social sciences may realize the potential of their educational missions.”⁵⁶

As a “matrix,” ethnic studies has played a large role in providing the “situations” through which U.S. music studies has flourished. It is one reason why so many of us, inside and outside of music departments, know one another’s work, collaborate, and ferret out the routes to one other’s domains through corridors designed with the assumption that we would never seek one other’s fellowship. I hope the current state of U.S. music studies is one in which we will continue to recognize and sustain these linkages. Music departments are not immune to business-model restructuring trends. There will be moments when the safer choice may seem to call for us to forget the contributions of bridge-crossing between music departments and programs, centers, and

56. Butler, “Ethnic Studies as a Matrix for the Humanities, the Social Sciences, and the Common Good,” 19.

departments grounded in social justice movements. That inevitable temptation is what I see as our current moment of danger. My hope for U.S. music studies is that we will use this moment to reaffirm our commitment to socially engaged interdisciplinary networks. I hope we will remember to teach our students the passageways that connect us and how to find new ones, and never forget what it took to get us to the crossroads where we stand today.

File Under: American Spaces

ROBERT FINK

The historical and its consequences, the "diachronic," the "etymology" of locations in the sense of what happened at a particular spot or place and thereby changed it—all of this becomes inscribed in space. . . . Yet this space is always, now and formerly, a *present* space, given as an immediate whole, complete with its associations and connections in their actuality.⁵⁷

Older cultural theory in many ways stressed *time*, suggesting that cultural traditions were handed down from generation to generation. New cultural theory, as it is developing in geography, cultural studies and many allied disciplines, stresses *space*, understanding culture to be constituted through space and *as* a space.⁵⁸

Space versus time

It may be that a subtle epistemic shift is, slowly but steadily, transforming the practice of North American musicology. *Time*, the original structuring principle of musicological inquiry, is making room for a new organizing framework based on the phenomenology of *space*. It may even be that this perspectival shift, bringing musicology more in line with other disciplines of cultural study, is related to the rise of American music as a central preoccupation of North American musicologists.

For an older generation of musicologists, even those who ultimately chose to specialize in music of the Americas, the initial impulse to enter the field often came from love of music much more firmly rooted in imagined historical time than in experienced social space. The fundamental issues of European "classical" music seemed, for this generation, temporal: not only did the works move purposively through subjective time as we listened, they demanded to be located in art-historical time as we studied. Our experience of music in place, the "where" rather than the "when," generated less interest. Although the organization of virtual sonic spaces was subjected to interpretive scrutiny

57. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 37.

58. Mitchell, *Cultural Geography: A Critical Introduction*, 63.

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